COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

DEFENDER

Volume 2, Issue 2 • Summer 2017

MARC ANDREYKO: GIVING BACK WITH *LOVE IS LOVE*

GENE LUEN YANG READS WITHOUT WALLS

COMICS TOP BANNED BOOKS LIST!

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Heroism is about the ability to inspire others. In our current era of division, rising censorship, and distrust, the need for heroes has rarely been greater. Thankfully, comics is abundant with heroic stories, and more impressively, heroic people. In this issue of *CBLDF Defender* we celebrate them!

Following the atrocious attack on the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, Marc Andreyko was driven by the need to make a difference. He marshaled comics' finest creative and executive efforts into developing *Love Is Love*, a record-smashing anthology benefiting the victims of the attack. CBLDF Advisory Board member José Villarrubia spoke with Andreyko about the anthology and what it means in the era of increased censorship for LGBTQIA content, starting on page 8.

Gene Luen Yang's work builds bridges of understanding, whether it's his modern-classic American Born Chinese, or his daily work as the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. Yang spoke to CBLDF Editorial Director Betsy Gomez about his current projects, Reading Without Walls, a month-long celebration encouraging kids to broaden their reading horizons, and *New Super-Man*, starting on page 12.

Sometimes heroism means standing up for principle against adversity. Malaysian cartoonist Zunar has been caught in such a struggle for most of the past decade and recently enjoyed a win in court, detailed on page 5. On the same page, we discuss Turkish cartoonist Musa Kart, who faces up to 29 years in prison for his cartoons.

Heroes inspire the rest of us to strive for more, to stand up for each other's rights, and to combat the challenges we face. Intellectual freedom challenges and attacks on the First Amendment are abundant right now, and CBLDF is standing up to them. On page 4, we outline the most recent range of censorship cases we've been working on, including victories in Virginia, Idaho, and Wisconsin.

Among all the content facing challenges and bans, comics are among the most vulnerable. On page 3, we report on the ALA's most recent Top Ten List of Challenged Books — the graphic novels *This One Summer* and *Drama* topped the list, and *Big Hard Sex Criminals* was also listed. Whether it's challenges in schools and libraries or legal cases, comics readers and cartoonists are often targets for attacks.

Thankfully, CBLDF can protect the rights of this dynamic medium thanks to heroic supporters like Katie and Dan Merritt of Green Brain Comics, who give back to their community with educational and cultural programming and the development of their store as a space for everyone. We profile them on page 14.

While the stakes are high for the First Amendment, we remain optimistic. The heroic people profiled in this issue of *CBLDF Defender* make the comics community a better place. Please join me in saluting their efforts!

—Charles Brownstein, Executive Director

CBLDF thanks our Guardian Members:

James Wood Bailey, Grant Geissman, and Philip Harvey

CBLDF's education program made possible with the generous support of the Gaiman Foundation and supporters like you!

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the First Amendment rights of the comics art form and its community of retailers, creators, publishers, librarians, educators, and readers. CBLDF provides legal referrals, representation, advice, assistance, and education in furtherance of these goals.

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Dishonorable Mention

Comics Top Annual List of Most Challenged Books

Since winning the Caldecott Honor in 2014, ***This One Summer*** has become one of the graphic novels that CBLDF has had to defend most frequently. So, we were expecting Jillian and Mariko Tamaki's award-winning graphic novel on the American Library Association's list of the most challenged books in 2016. We just weren't ready to see it at the top of the list! Other comics in the top ten were ***Drama*** by Raina Telgemeier and ***Big Hard Sex Criminals*** by Matt Fraction and Chip Zdarsky.

In 2016, *This One Summer* was removed from a K-12 library in Henning, Minnesota. CBLDF found out about the removal after the fact, and we led a coalition in defending the book, which was restored, albeit with the unsatisfactory decision that it could only be accessed by students in grades 10-12 and only if they have parental permission.

This One Summer was also subject to a series of heavily biased media attacks in Seminole County, Florida. It was initially removed from county elementary schools, but the district took the censorship one step further and reviewed the book in area high schools without a formal challenge. CBLDF led the defense of the book once again, ensuring the book was retained in the high schools without restriction.

Raina Telgemeier's *Drama* is "enjoying" its second appearance among the top ten. The highly acclaimed bestselling book earned the second spot on the list because it was removed from a Texas junior high school for being "politically, racially, or socially offensive," likely for the inclusion of gay characters. Notably, the ban that landed *Drama* on the list previously also happened in Texas.

Sex Criminals was "considered to be sexually explicit by library staff and administrators" at an undisclosed location. The series, which is acclaimed for its dissection of sexual taboo and frank (and frequently comedic) examination of sexuality, has run into issues before. In 2013, the second issue of the series was banned from comiXology's iOS app due to Apple's content policies.

Both *This One Summer* and *Drama* were challenged over LGBTQIA content, a trend that impacted the first five books on ALA's full list. *This One Summer* includes only a passing referenced to LGBTQIA issues, and the Tamakis expressed concern over such challenges in a statement they provided to ALA:

> *We worry about what it means to define certain content, such as LGBTQ content, as being of inappropriate [sic] for young readers. Which implicitly defines readers who do relate to this content, who share these experiences, as not normal, when really they are part of the diversity of young people's lives.*
>
> *A book doesn't stop existing by taking it off the shelf. Nor do the ideas contained within. Pulling a book from a library shelf makes it inaccessible to kids who depend on the library for books. It's an infringement on the freedom to read, to explore, to experience things outside of your world, to see yourself and your story in the pages of the books you read.*

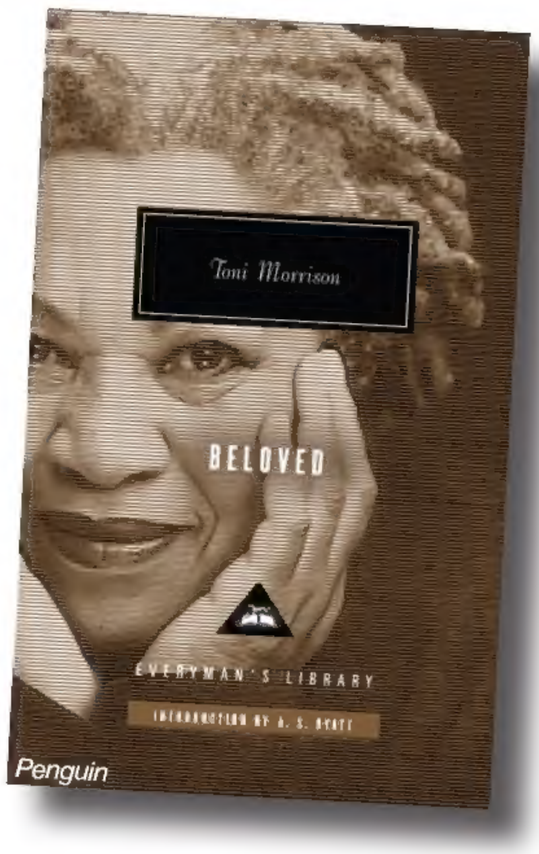
Read more about the most frequently challenged books of 2016 at http://cbldf.org/?p=30706

"Beloved Bill" Vetoed in Virginia

The bill that never dies, the so-called "Beloved bill" in Virginia, was put down by Governor Terry McAuliffe, who vetoed the latest attempt to attack reading materials in schools. CBLDF joined multiple letters in opposition to the overly-broad legislation.

This is the second time that Governor McAuliffe has had to veto the bill, which was resurrected as HB 2191 early this year. The bill would have required school districts to warn parents about educational materials containing undefined "sexually explicit" content, likely resulting in a chilling effect on curricula.

The original bill, HB 516, was conceived in 2016 under pressure from a small group of parents led by a mother who was disturbed by the content of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* when it was assigned to her now-college-aged son's AP English class. The bill raised concerns that it created a biased perspective and could lead to the censorship of valued classics, including (but not limited to) Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian*, the Bible, and most works by William Shakespeare.



The first bill passed both houses of the Assembly but was vetoed by Governor McAuliffe, who wrote that it "lack[ed] flexibility and would require the label of 'sexually explicit' to apply to an artistic work based on a single scene, without further context." After failing the legislative route, the bill was revived as a proposed administrative regulation before the Virginia Board of Education last fall. In late January the board rejected the regulation, but it had already been filed once again as HB 2191.

Perhaps this third failure's the charm, and we won't see another legislative attempt to attack *Beloved* and other literature in Virginia.

CENSORSHIP SCORECARD

CBLDF joins coalition efforts to protect the freedom to read comics. Taking an active stand against all instances of censorship curbs precedent that could adversely affect the rights upon which comics readers depend. Here are a few of our latest cases...

Idaho

WIN: CBLDF took point on a Kids' Right to Read Project letter in defense of *Sword Art Online: Aincrad*, the first volume in a popular manga series by Reki Kawahara and abec. The book was challenged by a middle school teacher in Jerome for "inappropriate" language and images. A review committee recommended that the book be retained.

Oklahoma

DEVELOPING: CBLDF led KRRP in defending Ariel Schrag's *Stuck in the Middle* after it was pulled from the Del Crest Middle School library. A review committee will decide the fate of the book, which was challenged for language and adult themes.

Arizona

LOSS: After Higley Unified School District in Gilbert removed Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* from the curriculum, CBLDF joined a KRRP letter defending the book. The district did not to restore the book and has taken the radical step of disallowing the use of complete novels in the curriculum.

North Carolina

LOSS: CBLDF joined a KRRP-led coalition to protest the removal of Sarah and Ian Hoffman's *Jacob's New Dress* from a first grade anti-bullying program in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The book was removed after complaints from local Republican lawmakers, who disagreed with the book's gender-nonconforming themes. The district ultimately chose another book for the program.

Wisconsin

WIN: After a parent in Marshfield School District complained of "foul language, and explicit and disturbing materials" in Jeannette Walls' memoir *The Glass Castle*, a school board member took it upon herself to file a formal challenge. CBLDF joined KRRP in defending the book, and a review committee voted unanimously to keep it.

DEVELOPING: CBLDF joined KRRP in urging the Sauk Prairie School District superintendent to affirm a review committee's decision to keep Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* in the curriculum. The book was challenged over explicit language, violence, and sexual references.

Florida Legislature Passes Classroom Censorship Bill

The Florida Senate approved the House version of HB 989, a bill that would facilitate challenges to classroom materials, sending the legislation on to Governor Rick Scott for signature or veto. The bill purports to require "a noninflammatory, objective, and balanced viewpoint on issues" presented in textbooks and other instructional materials. But the two groups pushing the legislation, the Florida Citizens' Alliance and Better Collier County Public Schools, have in the past raised objections to the teaching of climate change and evolution, as well as books with LGBTQIA themes. CBLDF joined the National Coalition Against Censorship in protesting the bill.

Turkish Cartoonist Musa Kart Indicted After Lengthy Detention

Five months after Turkish political cartoonist Musa Kart and several of his colleagues from *Cumhuriyet* newspaper were arrested on suspicion of supporting Kurdish militants and the Gulenist movement, they finally were formally indicted. The charges specifically against Kart are "helping an armed terrorist organization while not being a member" and "abusing trust." If convicted, Kart could face up to 29 years in prison. Organizations that advocate for press freedom say that the charges are baseless and provide cover for President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to silence accurate coverage of his regime.

Malaysian Court Awards Zunar Damages for Books Lost in 2010 Raid

Malaysian political cartoonist Zunar won a long-awaited victory when a High Court judge agreed he was entitled to compensation for books and original art seized by police in 2010. Although the judge awarded him 18,000 Ringgit (about $4,000), Zunar said he was even more gratified by the court's acknowledgment that "the confiscation of cartoon artworks and books under laws such as the Sedition Act is a gross violation of a cartoonist's rights to freedom of expression." Despite the victory, Zunar still faces 10 counts of sedition, which could net him more than 40 years in prison. His trial has been delayed numerous times since February 2015, and he has been banned from leaving the country until the case is resolved.

Find out more about these stories and get the latest news every day at http://cbldf.org!

BPAL'S NEW *AMERICAN GODS* LINE BENEFITS CBLDF!

Black Phoenix Alchemy Lab has been a long-time supporter of CBLDF. BPAL is once again showing its support for the freedom to read with a new line of scents, nail polish, and atmosphere sprays inspired by Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*!

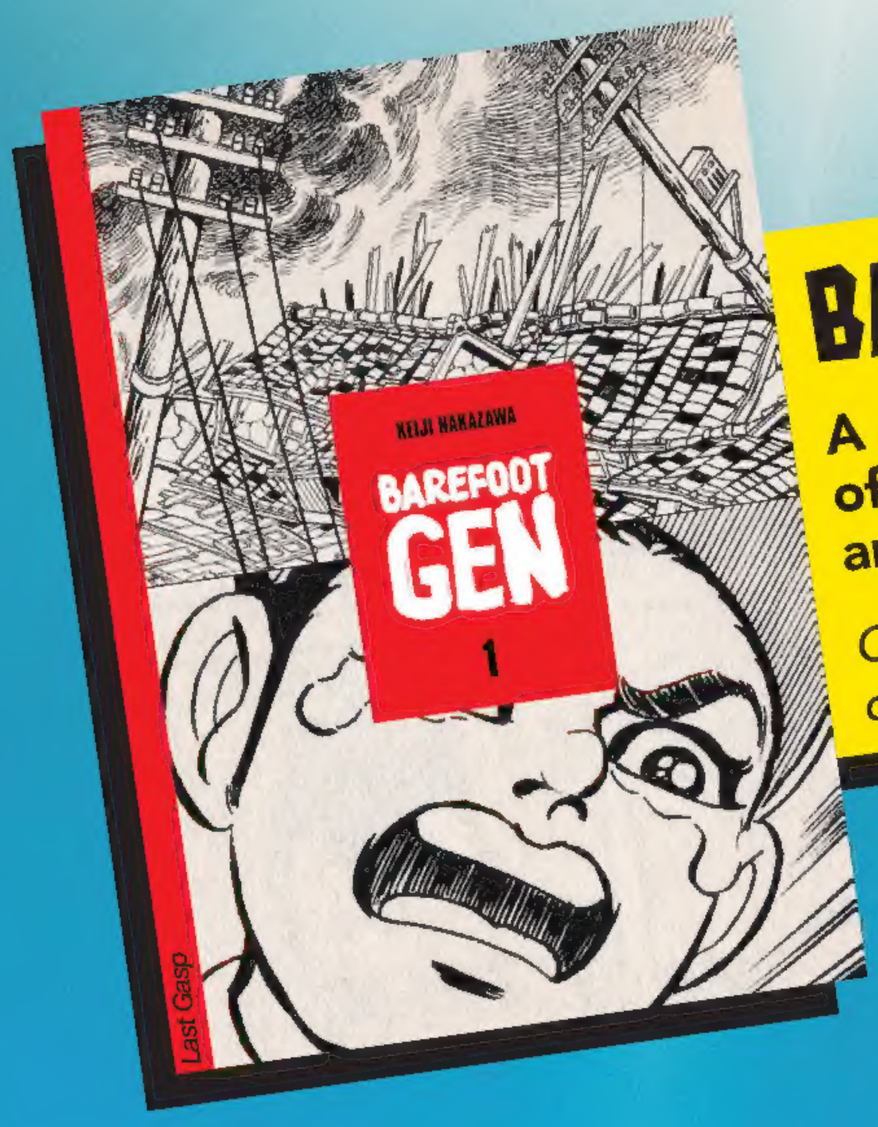
American Gods continues BPAL's creative partnership with Gaiman, which has previously included scents for *Coraline*, *The Graveyard Book*, *Good Omens*, and *Neverwhere*. Each unique *American Gods* scent is packaged in a 5 mL apothecary bottle featuring label artwork by Hugo Award-winning artist Julie Dillon. These collectible, hand-blended perfume oils capture Gaiman's vivid characters and story points in fragrance.

Proceeds from the *American Gods* line benefit CBLDF. The scents are available exclusively through BPAL's website: http://tinyurl.com/lflcu3p

The atmosphere sprays and nail polishes are available via the Black Phoenix Trading Post: http://tinyurl.com/k9fyhr6

10 BANNED COMICS FOR SUMMER READING!

Summer is here, so it's time to stock up on comics! Visit your local comic book shop or library to get these amazing banned and challenged titles!



BAREFOOT GEN

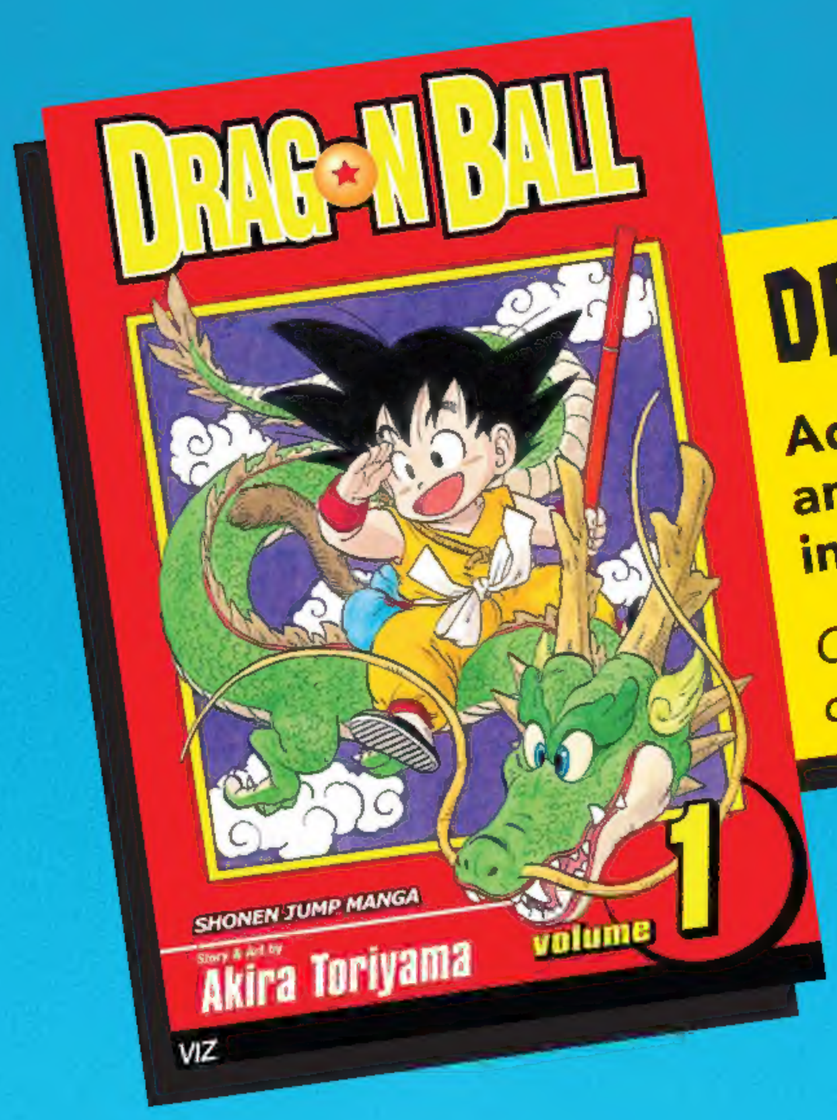
A poignant manga history of the Hiroshima bombing and its aftermath!

Challenged for: violence, discrimination

DRAMA

Callie loves theater, but middle school drama isn't limited to school musicals!

Challenged for: sexual content, LGBTQIA themes



DRAGON BALL

Adventure, martial arts, and dragons, all in one international bestseller!

Challenged for: violent content, nudity

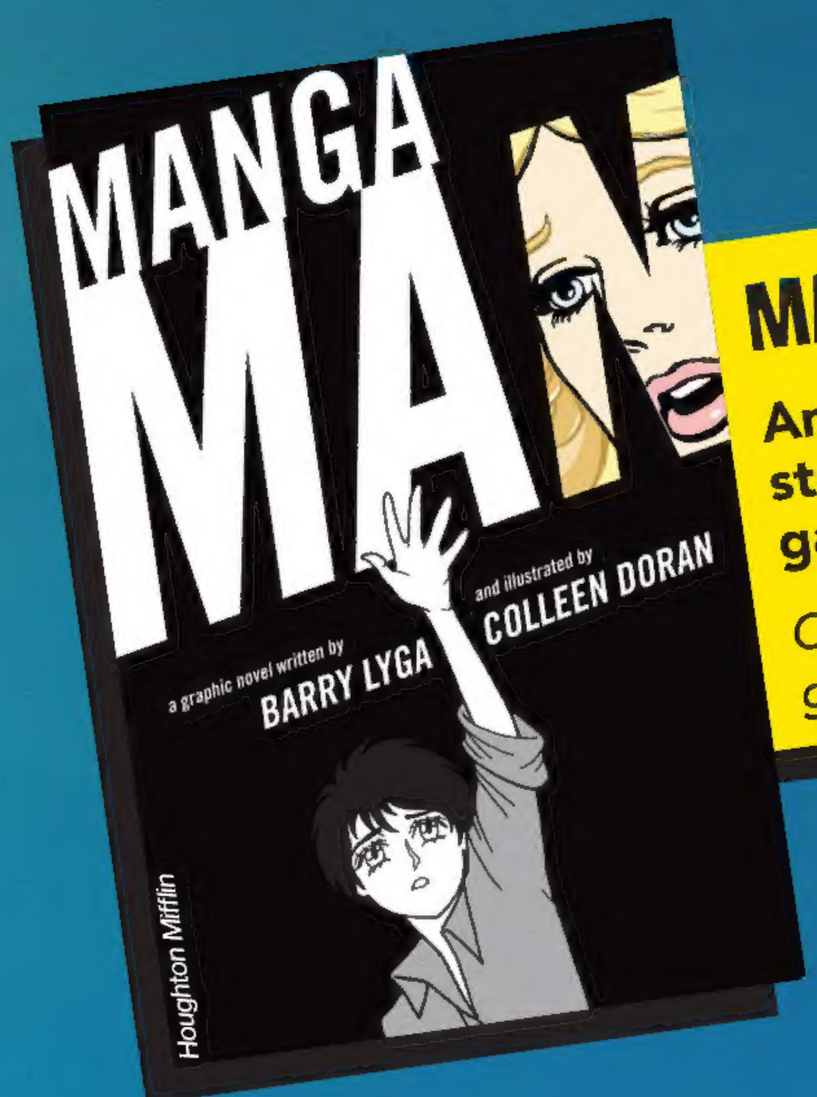
BONE

An all-ages fantasy featuring action, comedy, and an epic hero's quest!

Challenged for: promotion of smoking and drinking, racism

Find a CBLDF retail member near you:
http://cbldf.org/about-us/retail-members/

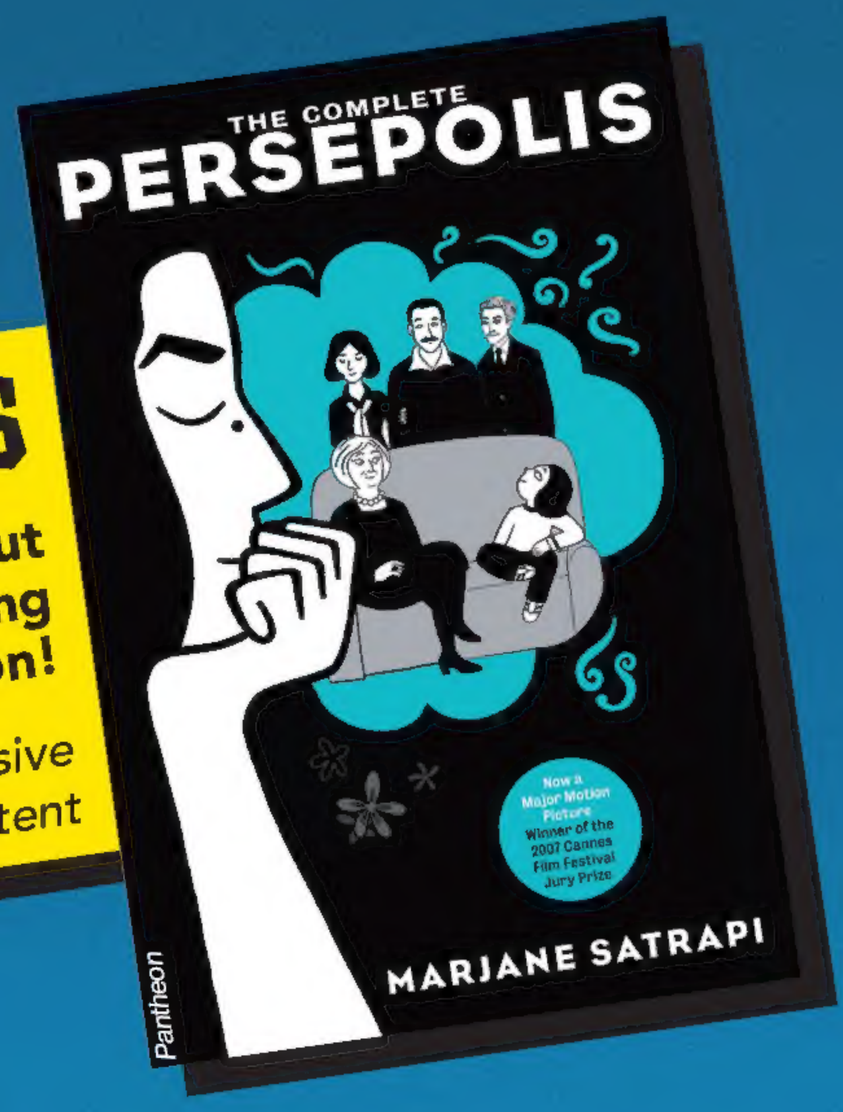
To learn why these comics and more were challenged, visit http://cbldf.org/banned-challenged-comics/



MANGAMAN

An unconventional love story and mash-up of manga and Western comics!

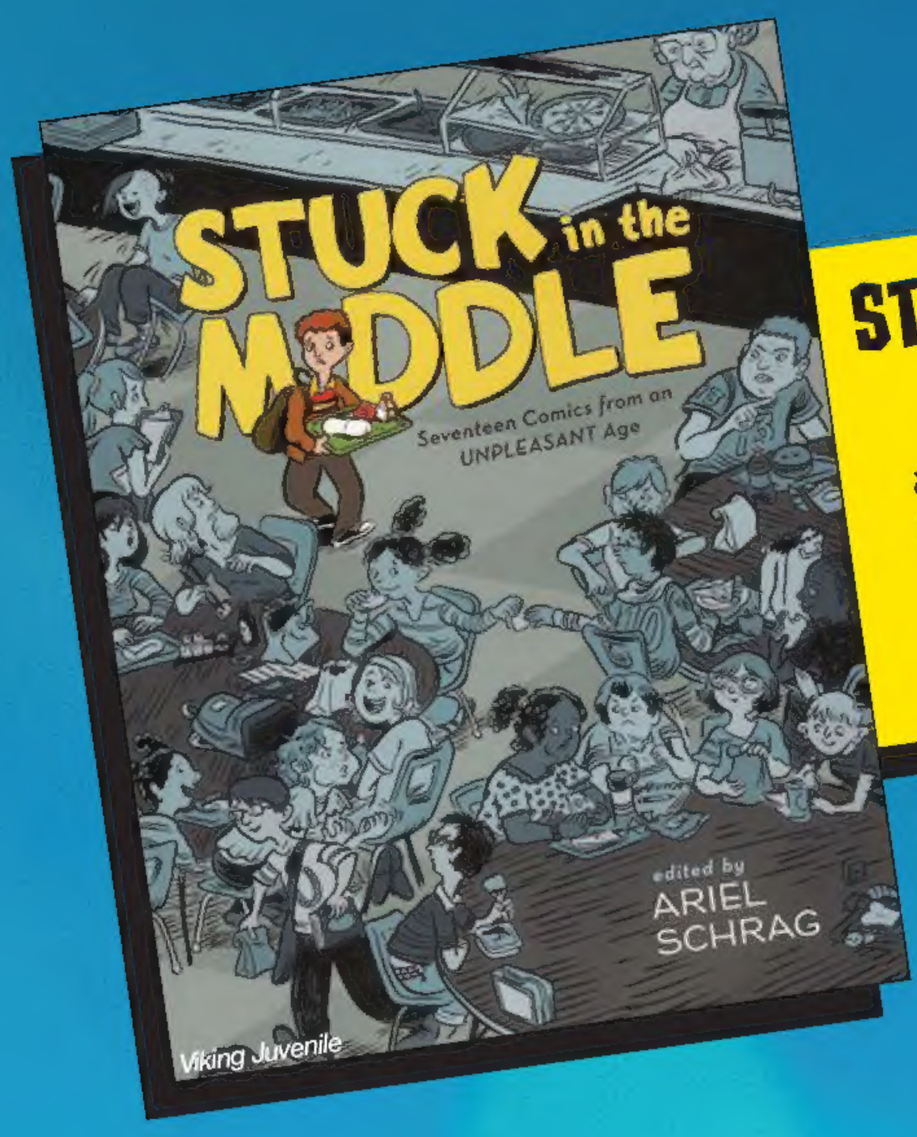
Challenged for: pixelated genitals



PERSEPOLIS

Acclaimed memoir about coming of age during Iran's Islamic Revolution!

Challenged for: offensive language, violent content



STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

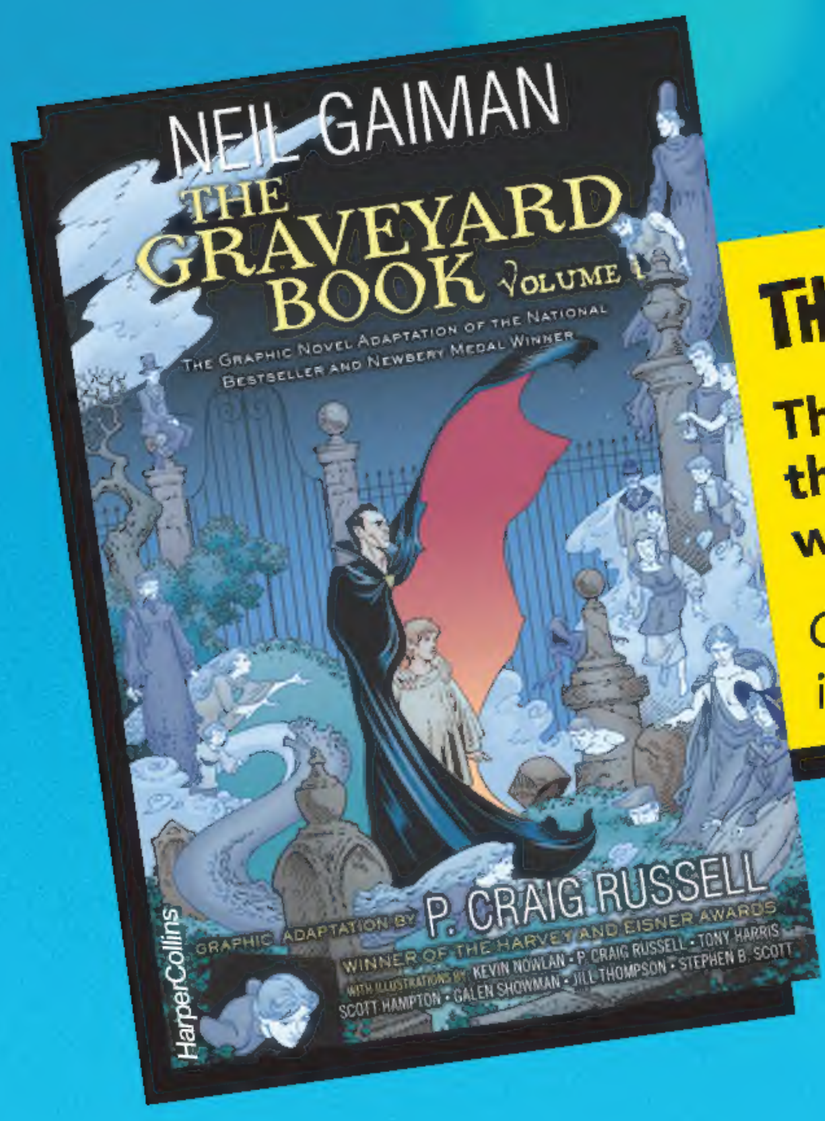
Seventeen stories from an unpleasant age by the biggest names in comics!

Challenged for: language, adult themes

SWORD ART ONLINE

A worldwide phenomenon with more than 20 million copies in print!

Challenged for: language, inappropriate images


NEIL GAIMAN
THE GRAVEYARD BOOK
VOLUME 1
THE GRAPHIC NOVEL ADAPTATION OF THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER AND NEWBERY MEDAL WINNER
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THE GRAVEYARD BOOK

The comic adaptation of the Newbery Medal-winning novel!

Challenged for: violent imagery

THIS ONE SUMMER

The first graphic novel shortlisted for the Caldecott Medal!

Challenged for: sexual content, unsuited to age group

GIVING BACK

On June 12, 2016, 49 people lost their lives and 53 people were injured at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Writer Marc Andreyko couldn't sit by as the LGBTQIA community and people around the world suffered in the wake of the massacre. He wanted to prove that *Love Is Love*...

Interview by José Villarrubia

What was your personal reaction to the tragedy at Pulse Nightclub? What thoughts first crossed your mind in what it meant to you and to the gay community at large?

Initially, I got sick — felt punched in the gut and had dry-heaves for a few minutes. And I initially flashed back emotionally to the darkest days of the AIDS crisis, when death was swift and everywhere. In some ways, we had come so far, but in others... well, hate is really hard to extinguish sometimes.

How familiar were you with previous comics anthologies, like *AARGH!*, *Strip AIDS*, and *Hands Off!*, that specifically addressed homophobia?

Of course! As a gay kid growing up in Ohio, finding comics that had gay content? Yes, please! I still have my copies of all of these books! And those books, along with the "fundraiser" culture of the '80s — Live Aid, "We Are the World," Comic Relief, et al. — are the inspiration for *Love Is Love*.

What goals did you want to achieve, artistically, socially, and politically? What were your criteria for the creators included?

I just wanted an outlet for our collective grief and a way to help the victims initially. It was a knee jerk reaction to the tragedy. As the list of contributors (and the diversity therein) grew, I started realizing that this book was taking on a political component simply by having such A-listers and big publishers support it so loudly and freely. And that political statement was our title — *Love Is Love*.

My criteria for creators were simple: have a point of view and get the page in on time! I also approached some of my superstar pals to contribute — knowing that the more contributors we had with "names" and/or large fan followings, then hopefully more attention and sales would follow.

Was anyone you asked to contribute against the idea of doing this book?

God, no. Anyone who would feel that way is not someone I would be friends with or respect artistically.

What were the biggest surprises for you once the work was all assembled?

The biggest was how consistent this book is. Anthologies are tough — ones with a six-month-from-idea-to-shelves turnaround are even tougher — but I read this book and am in awe of how powerful they all are. Hats off to my editors, Sarah Gaydos and Jamie Rich, who put the pages in order and masterfully controlled the rhythm of how you read it.

From *Love Is Love* (2016). Courtesy IDW Publishing and DC Comics.

Art by Kaare Andrews

On a personal level, I think Kaare Andrews' piece, in its simplicity and emotion, is the piece that makes me cry just thinking about it.

What was the most challenging aspect of taking on such a massive project?

Coordination. Communication. Hitting deadlines. All the stuff editors deal with every day. But this one had over 300 artists, writers, colorists, and letterers involved. Looking back, I am amazed at the relative ease with which this happened.

Do you have any regrets? Anything you would have done differently?

My only real regret is some of the people I wanted to get, who I simply couldn't find a way to reach or who were not available. But that is "regret" all in lowercase. I could not be prouder, happier, or more humbled by the final product and all the creators who so generously donated their craft and time.

Do you see the need of further anthologies like this, or do you think there may be a "burnout" effect if they are published when there is not an emergency?

It is tough. I do think we need to give back more as a species, but I also think a "burnout" effect is a real risk. We live in a time where the news cycle is so fast that the next big story is only minutes away. I did actually have someone tell me that no one would care since the book was coming out six months after the massacre, and I was slack-jawed by the comment. My thought was, "If you've forgotten about this in six months, you are awful," and we just plowed ahead.

Unfortunately, I think these projects only work when they are a reaction to tragedy. Look how much blood donations go up when there is a hurricane or a tornado. We as a race seem to only react en masse to "big" events (which is another issue entirely), so I think a regular charity book would be tough going.

Half of the books on this year's top ten most challenged books list from the American Library Association were challenged for LGBTQIA content, including the top two titles, which were graphic novels: *This One Summer* and *Drama*. What do you personally make of this?

It's typical. People want straw men to go after, and focusing on books is an easy target. The people that challenge books generally don't read many to begin with, and, like One Million Moms, are small but vocal groups who would better use their energies elsewhere if they really cared about people. Posers wrapped in (usually misrepresented) bits of scripture. I mean, who doesn't want their kids to read? Letting them see Fox News is actually exponentially more damaging than a graphic novel about love.

Is there anything else you'd like to add and that you have not been asked about this project before?

I'd just like to thank everyone — from creators and editors to production people to everyone who bought copies. So far, we have raised about $170,000.00 [for the victims, survivors, and their families] and are going into a fifth printing! We are keeping the book in print, as well as having many foreign editions in the works around the world. It is so humbling and inspiring to see a project that started as a reaction to such pain and loss has become bigger than anyone could have imagined. Love is love, indeed.

From *Love Is Love* (2016). Written by Marc Andreyko. Art by Olivier Coipel. Colored by José Villarrubia, Courtesy IDW Publishing and DC Comics.

HOW THE COMICS CODE ERASED LGBTQIA CHARACTERS FROM MAINSTREAM COMICS

Most people remember Fredric Wertham's attack on horror and violence in comics in the early 1950s. But there was another aspect that preoccupied Wertham just as much: the potential for comics to "stimulate children to homosexual fantasies, of the nature of which they may be unconscious." According to comics historian Alan Kistler, the 1954 Comics Code was carefully drawn up to ensure that openly LGBTQIA characters were banished for decades.

Wertham was most troubled by the nature of Batman and Robin's relationship, but one pre-Code story in 1953's *Space Adventures* #7 went well beyond the oblique suggestion of homosexuality and portrayed a scientist self-inducing a sex change through hormone therapy. Kistler notes that "Transformation" was almost certainly inspired by Christine Jorgensen, who became world-famous after her male-to-female transition in the early 1950s.

In "Transformation," scientist Lars Kranston undertakes a sex change almost on a whim after crashing on Mars in a spaceship. Having no way to return to Earth and believing that the entire crew including his girlfriend Betty Stone is dead, Lars decides to inject himself with hormones as "an interesting experiment." Although the decision to transition is made quite flippantly, it does provide for a moment of introspection on male-dominated world affairs.

Although Lars' sex change is ultimately used as the setup for an ironic "twist" — Betty actually survived the crash and seems unreceptive to a same-sex relationship — the hormone treatment itself is primarily treated as an amazing scientific advancement in the same sci-fi neighborhood as cloning or space travel. The cover of *Space Adventures #7* touts "Transformation" as "the hard-hitting story of scientists' most recent revelation."

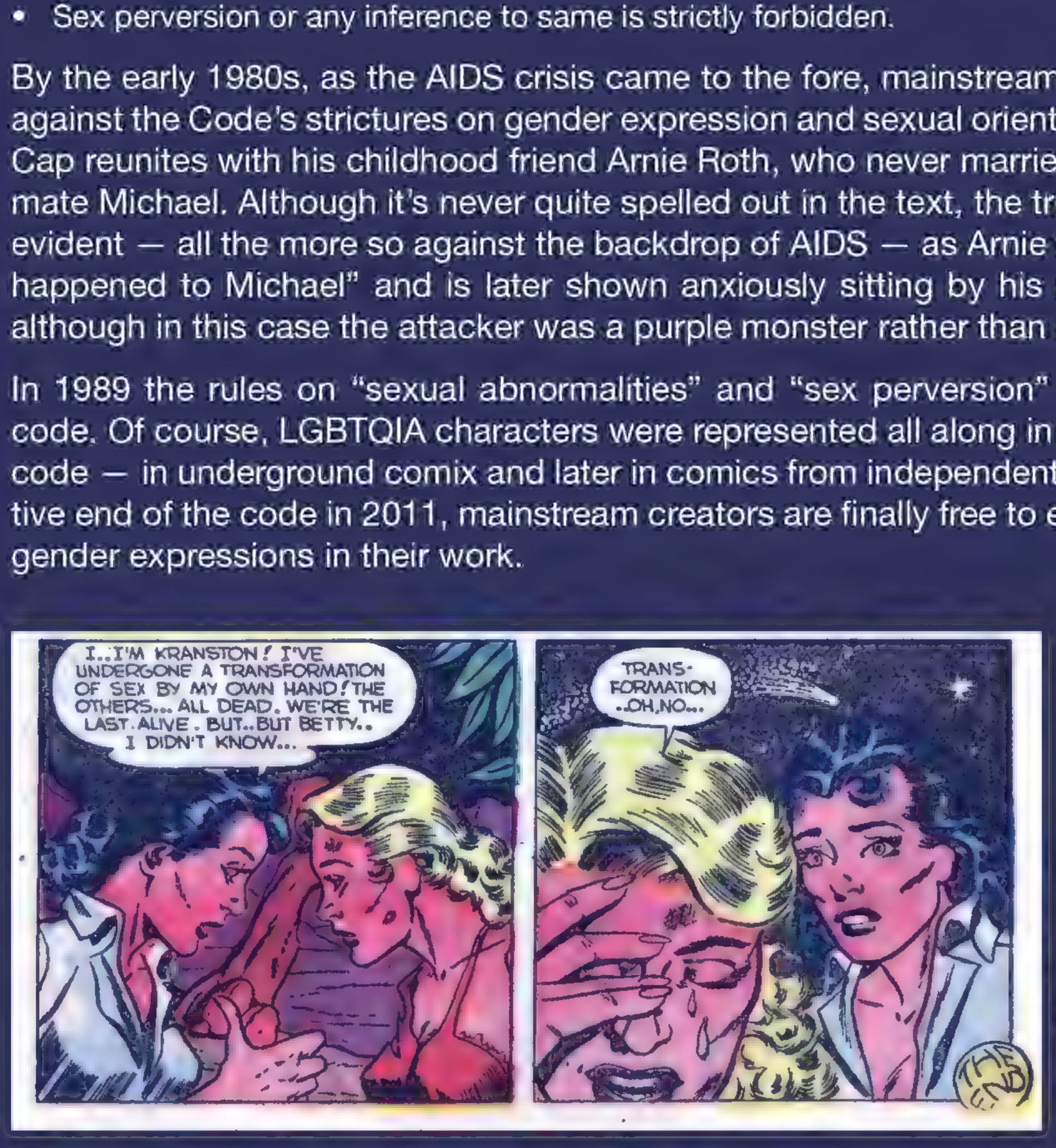
Just the following year, however, the Comics Code's ban on "sex perversion" would render such a story impossible. The pertinent Code rules that effectively banished LGBTQIA characters were:

- Illicit sex relations are neither to be hinted at or portrayed. Violent love scenes, as well as sexual abnormalities are unacceptable.
- The treatment of love-romance stories shall emphasize the value of home and the sanctity of marriage.
- Sex perversion or any inference to same is strictly forbidden.

By the early 1980s, as the AIDS crisis came to the fore, mainstream comic creators began to push against the Code's strictures on gender expression and sexual orientation. In *Captain America* #268, Cap reunites with his childhood friend Arnie Roth, who never married but is very close to his roommate Michael. Although it's never quite spelled out in the text, the true nature of their relationship is evident — all the more so against the backdrop of AIDS — as Arnie first tells Cap that "something's happened to Michael" and is later shown anxiously sitting by his ailing boyfriend's hospital bed, although in this case the attacker was a purple monster rather than a deadly virus.

In 1989 the rules on "sexual abnormalities" and "sex perversion" were finally removed from the code. Of course, LGBTQIA characters were represented all along in other comics not bound by the code — in underground comix and later in comics from independent publishers. But with the definitive end of the code in 2011, mainstream creators are finally free to explore diverse orientations and gender expressions in their work.

by Maren Williams


I..I'M KRANSTON! I'VE UNDERGONE A TRANSFORMATION OF SEX BY MY OWN HAND! THE OTHERS... ALL DEAD. WE'RE THE LAST. ALIVE. BUT..BUT BETTY.. I DIDN'T KNOW...
TRANS-FORMATION ..OH,NO...
THE END

In 1953, "Transformation" would venture into territory that would be forbidden by the Comics Code a little over a year later.
(Excerpt from "Transformation," *Space Adventures* #7, Art attributed to Dick Giordano. Published by Charlton, July 1953.)

MR. AMBASSADOR

Gene Luen Yang leads the charge for comics and diverse reading (and re-imagines Superman while he's at it).

Yang writes *New Super-Man*, about a boy in Shanghai, China, who inherits the Man of Steel's superpowers. (Variant cover artwork for *New Super-Man* #11 by Bernard Chang. Courtesy DC Comics).

So, you are the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. What has that experience been like? What are some of your responsibilities, and should I call you Mr. Ambassador?

[Laughs.] It's been a ton of fun... The point of the appointment is to get both more kids reading and kids reading more, and I do that by giving speeches, I'll go to different events like the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C. or conventions like Emerald City Comicon, and I'll talk about reading

and how awesome books are with young people. I do school visits — sometimes it's virtual, sometimes it's in person. And I'm also promoting a challenge called Reading Without Walls...

I want to get kids to go outside their comfort zones and explore the world through books. So, specifically I'm asking kids to one, read books about people who aren't like them, who don't look like them or live like them; two, read books about topics that they might find intimidating; and three, read books in formats that they don't normally read for fun, so if normally all you read is like chapter books for fun, I want you to try a graphic novel — and vice versa as well.

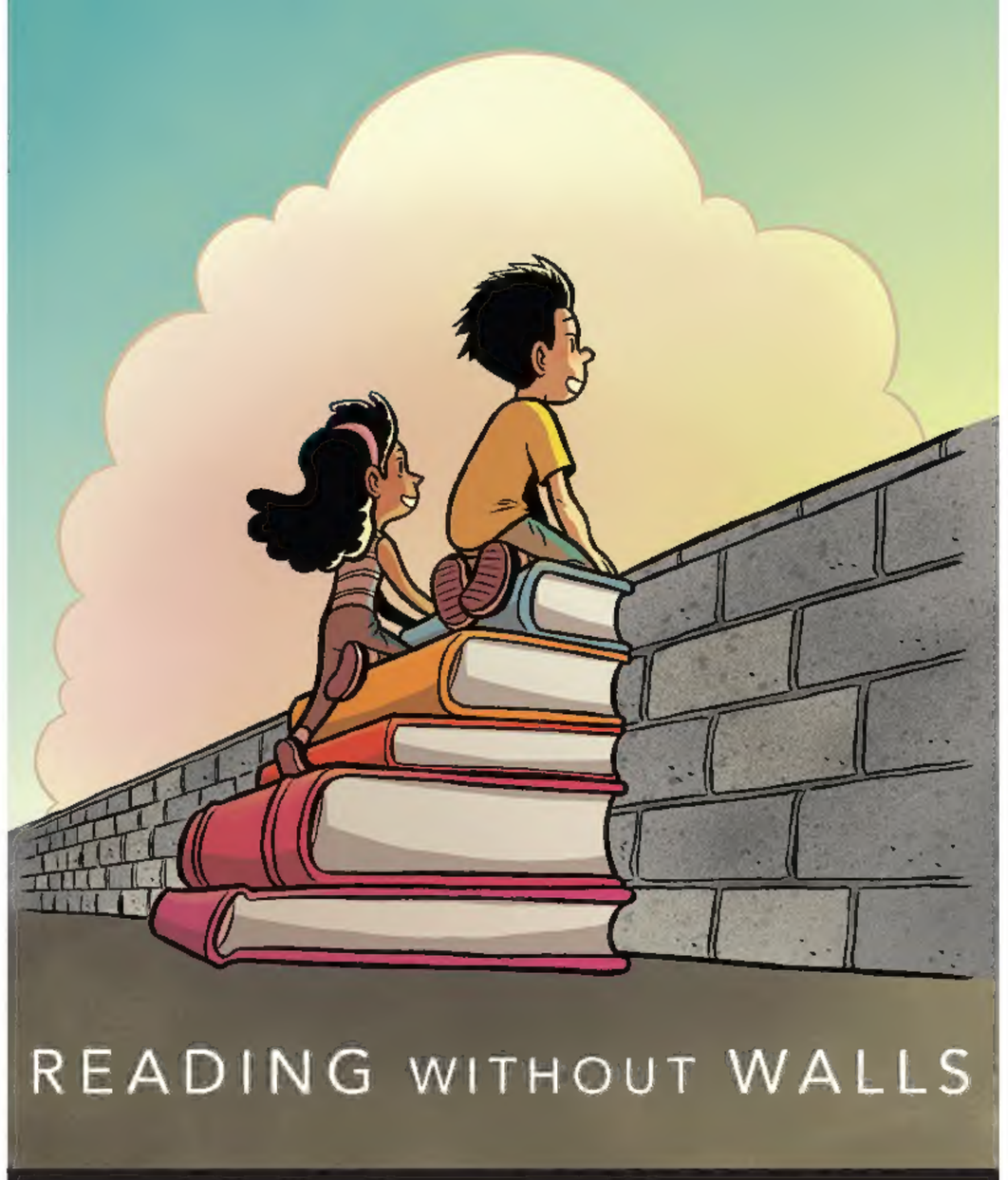
Reading Without Walls just went annual. Why was it important to you to make sure that it lives beyond your ambassadorship?

Yeah, I have to say I'm incredibly lucky that I'm with Macmillan, and it really is the folks of Macmillan who've provided so much support for the Reading Without Walls initiative. It was their idea to make it annual. I was just like, we're going to do it — you know, we'll do it for two years and then we'll let it go. And they really wanted to make it every April we push Reading Without Walls. Part of it is that the response we've gotten from librarians and bookstore owners and teachers has been really overwhelming, you know, they'll send photos to me of these different Reading Without Walls displays. They'll show classes holding up books that the read to fulfill the challenge. It's been awesome. It's been wonderful.

What are some of the challenges of working on Kong Kenan, the Chinese Superman?

After I finished my run on the main Superman title, I had these talks with DC Comics. They said they wanted a Chinese Superman character, and I was like, "That sounds terrible. You should not do that, that sounds horrible, I don't want anything to do with it." And then I had this series of meetings with Jim Lee and with Geoff Johns, during these meetings the character started talking to me, and I was like, "I think I'm going to need to do it." And one of the reasons I didn't want to do it was specifically because Clark Kent is supposed to be Truth, Justice, and the American Way, so what does that mean in modern China?

This wasn't going to be a Chinese American character, they wanted like a Chinese character living in China.



Yang's Reading Without Walls initiative, now an annual month-long celebration, encourages kids to read diverse books. (Art by Gene Luen Yang. Courtesy Macmillan.)

My parents — my dad was born in Taiwan, my mom was born on mainland China but her family left just as the Communist Party was coming into power, so I grew up with these really specific and really strong opinions about modern China and about the government and issues of freedom and that sort of thing. It took me a little while as I was growing up to realize that the issues were more nuanced, and that the China of today is not the same as the China that my mom's family left. A lot of the book is dealing with that kind of stuff.... We don't talk about Truth, Justice, and the American Way; we talk about Truth, Justice, and Democracy. How are those things going to be expressed in modern China?

You've been a long time supporter of CBLDF. Why is fighting censorship important to you?

Like I said, I come from a very specific background. My mom, my parents have very specific views given what happened in China, and I think freedom of expression really is about protecting the minority, however you define that word. It's making sure that people with unpopular ideas, people from backgrounds that may seem strange to the majority, are able to express themselves... it's protecting voices that are unpopular so that as a diverse community we can come up with creative solutions.

interview by Betsy Gomez
transcribed by Maren Williams

Read the full interview at http://cbldf.org/?p=30618

FUNDRAISING

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 24-25, 2017: ID10T Fest

- Shoreline Amphitheater, Mountain View, CA
- http://id10tfest.com/

July 19-23, 2017: Comic-Con International

- San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA
- https://www.comic-con.org/cci

September 16-17, 2017: Small Press Expo

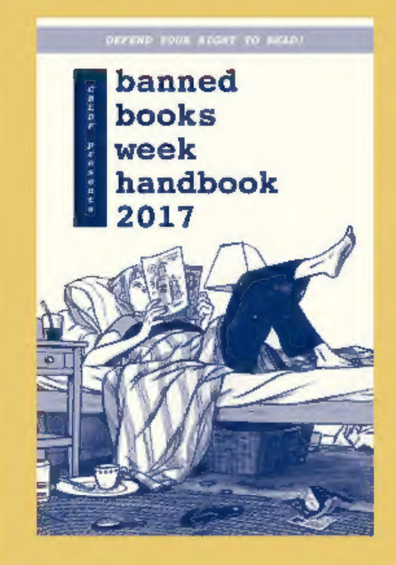
- Marriott North Bethesda Hotel & Conference Center, Bethesda, MD
- http://www.smallpressexpo.com/

October 5-8, 2017: New York Comic Con

- Javits Center, New York, NY
- http://www.newyorkcomiccon.com/

Schedule subject to change. Visit cbldf.org for updates.

COMING SOON



CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook 2017

Cover: Jillian Tamaki

Comics are the most banned books in the U.S.! Discover the books facing censorship, and explore our practical ideas for hosting Banned Books Week events in your store, school, or library! **Available August 30, 2017!**

NOW AVAILABLE

HELP THE CBLDF...
DEFEND COMICS
You're lucky I'm hate stanking guard, Lucy!
Great Andy! Just hold that pose...
Celebrating Free Comic Book Day 2017!

FCBD 2017: Defend Comics

Art & story: various

For 30 years, CBLDF has fought to protect your right to read and make comics. This anthology features a new Lucy & Andy Neanderthal story from Jeffrey Brown, along with many more terrific all-ages comics! Boxes now available for your store or events: http://tinyurl.com/l2gvgbu

RETAIL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CBLDF's work is possible because of our members, which include comics retailers such as Katie and Dan Merritt of Green Brain Comics in Dearborn, Michigan.

One of your goals as retailers is "to provide a comic book store that has something for everybody." How do you accomplish this?

We accomplish this through our diverse selection. We believe comics are more than superheroes and maintain a wide variety of titles for every age and taste, including non-traditional GNs like biographies and nonfiction.

Green Brain Comics also supports self-published, locally made comics and GNs. Being open and supportive to all requests and tastes means customers never have to worry about asking for something odd or unexpected.

Why is CBLDF's mission important to you?

Katie: We believe access to books, comics or otherwise, is essential for a free thinking society. The CBLDF's missions of protecting that access, and those who supply that access, is a noble and necessary service to society.

Dan: As comic retailers, we appreciate the hard work of the CBLDF and what they stand for. We share the belief that everyone should have reasonable access to information, in comics, books, journalism, and the internet. And the people that create content should have the freedom to bring their work to market without restriction, or fear of censorship.

Our society is built on these fundamentals, and we take comfort that the CBLDF is there to defend our First Amendment rights. All of us at Green Brain Comics appreciate the leadership role that Executive Director Charles Brownstein and the rest of the staff have taken in education, consultation, and collaboration to educate everyone on their right to read.

Read a longer version of this interview at cbldf.org!

JOIN THE FIGHT!

We have membership plans for donors in every budget, and all of them are tax-deductible:

- **$100 Member** CBLDF membership card, CBLDF button set, CBLDF sticker set, CBLDF member patch, and EXCLUSIVE member-only t-shirt featuring art by Vanesa R. Del Rey!
- **Associate Member** Name your donation, as low as $5! Comes with the CBLDF membership card.
- **$50 Supporter Member** CBLDF membership card, CBLDF button set, CBLDF sticker set, and CBLDF member patch.
- **$250 Defender Member** All of the above, plus the CBLDF water bottle and *CBLDF Presents: She Changed Comics!*
- **$500 Protector Member** All of the above, plus the CBLDF embossed executive journal!
- **$1,000 Champion Member** All of the above, plus recognition in *CBLDF Liberty Annual 2018* and the CBLDF tote bag!
- **$2,500 Guardian Member** All of the above, plus special recognition in select CBLDF publications throughout 2018!

Use the signup form on the back cover of this magazine or visit http://cbldf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships to join today!

Art by Vanesa R. Del Rey

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY 1954 - 2011
I READ BANNED COMICS
COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
MEMBER 2017
CBLDF
BILL GAINES WAS RIGH
PROUD MEMBER OF THE CBLDF

RADIO FREE COMIX!

A mix of interviews, discussions about censorship, convention panel recordings, and archival materials, the CBLDF Podcast is a monthly event, from our keyboards to your ears. In the most recent episode, lay your ears on an interview with Katie Skelly (*Nurse Nurse*, *Operation Margarine*, *My Pretty Vampire*)! The CBLDF Podcast is made possible in part by a donation from the Gaiman Foundation and member support.

Listen at http://cbldf.org/podcast

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"